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HAMMOND TIMES
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GARY
POST TRIBUNE
D. 78,241 S. 80,230

Chemical facility still Griffith issue

By PAULETTE HADDIX
Post-Tribune Correspondent

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George Milne, 411 S. Griffith Blvd., told the Town Board Tuesday night he is still concerned about fencing needed for a barrel burial ground at American Chemical and acidic wastes from the firm entering the town's sewage system.

While the Town Board's investigation into similar concerns Milne raised early in August is still continuing, the board reported at its Aug. 18 meeting that there apparently were no real problems at American Chemical.

Milne disputed this and alleged American Chemical is in violation of town and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards. He presented the board with copies of EPA inspection reports to document his charges.

The board members said they would study Milne's material, along with the nearly completed laboratory analysis of water in a ditch on the American Chemical property and an expected up-to-date report from the EPA.

The town's director of public works, Glen V. Reyome, said he asked the EPA to make a report on the American Chemical operations several days ago.

He declined comment on the preliminary findings of the laboratory analysis, preferring to wait for the formal and final report from the lab.

While Town Board members were reportedly told by an

American Chemical spokesman that the only barrels buried on the site were filled only with sand, Milne contends that there are hazardous materials in the barrels.

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Also, the EPA ordered that American Chemical establish an evacuation plan and maintain proper records on the treatment, storage and disposal of its material.

To help resolve the American Chemical complaints and investigation, Reyome said he will try to have a report on the situation ready for the board's Sept. 15 meeting. Board members suggested that representatives of the EPA and American Chemical could be invited to explain their positions publicly.

M'ville Sewer Money Waits on EPA

BY LISA MAHONEY
Times Staff Writer

MERRILLVILLE — A Merrillville Conservancy District grant amendment request to help pay for settlements for dry wells in the township is still under review by the U.S. Environmental Agency.

The contractor dewatering along Ridge Road, has sent its crews back to work.

Construction of deep tunnels along Ridge Road was stalled for two months because of a strike of heavy equipment operators. Workers returned to the job site last week and requests for well inspections have increased, according to Chris Savarese, water emergency coordinator.

A second contractor doing

district in April.

The request received state approval May 18 and was sent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The EPA's Chicago office received the request from the corps in July.

Thomas Geishecker, chief of the EPA's Indiana construction management branch, said review time for the request would take a little longer than usual because of its unique nature. "This is the first time region V (of the FPA) has been involved in this," he said.

would be honored. The EPA set guidelines for providing residents with water the MCD must follow in order to qualify for the grant amendment.

James Flora, MCD consulting engineer, said he will ask for an additional increase in the grant as soon as it is approved.

If the grant amendment is approved, the federal government will pay 75 percent of the cost of the water emergency. The state will pick up 10 percent with the balance the MCD's responsibility.

Waste Contained

By FELICIA GAYLE
Times Staff Writer

GRIFFITH — Hazardous liquid waste has been prevented from leaking from a drum burial site in Griffith, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

American Chemical Services surrounded the Colfax Street burial site with clay, according to John McGuire, administrator of the EPA's Midwest Region. About 2,000 drums are buried at the site.

The clay was scraped from the adjoining Griffith landfill, McGuire said. "The exposed clay around the site will be monitored periodically to determine there is no leaching or another threat or an oil or hazardous waste discharge from the site that could drain toward the (town's) landfill," he said.

Last August, EPA asked the firm to stop the leaking. Cleanup progressed according to a program outlined by the EPA.

Using its authority under the Clean

Water Act, the EPA convinced the firm to patch an area of the burial site with clay. The two- to three-foot patch was completed by a Nov. 1 deadline.

EPA suggested the clay patch to prevent pollution from getting into Turkey Creek, according to EPA Inspector Ralph Coons.

The 2,000 drums buried next to the Griffith landfill were placed there about 15 years ago, before strict laws were imposed on disposal of hazardous waste, Coons said. He said he doesn't know what is in the drums.

Oil leaking from the site contained phenol, a substance the EPA has defined as hazardous.

Coons said James Tarpo of American Chemical Services said the drums were punctured before they were buried, to prevent accumulation of waste.

The burial site won't have to meet EPA hazardous waste siting criteria because the drums were buried before the criteria were developed, Coons said.

EPA engineers inspected the site in May and August.

Task force sought for toxic waste cleanup

RIFFITH — A Griffith resident wants the town board to form a task force to help speed federal Superfund cleanup of the American Chemical Services toxic waste area.

erry Steagall wants the force to include elected officials and representatives from the board of health, Environmental Protection Agency, town

board and residents.

Steagall was asked to serve as task force president. Trustees Patricia Schaadt, D-4th, and Martha Hanrath, D-3rd were designated as board representatives.

In his report to the board, Steagall said hazardous toxic waste drums have been buried at the firm's Colfax Avenue

site since 1970. He said up to 30,000 drums were buried in a 10,000 cubic yard area. Rowe, D-2nd, disputed that figure.

Steagall wants the EPA to set up a timetable, procure engineering studies and perform a feasibility study to help locate the buried drums.

He also wants to identify all companies which used ACS as a disposal site

and begin negotiations with them to determine their percentage of liability. His proposal includes the potential for litigation if the generators and ACS don't clean the site.

In the third phase of the monitoring, Steagall said the EPA should conduct an

(Continued Back Page This Section)

Task force sought for cleanup

From Page One

epidemiological survey of the area around ACS to determine if there are any abnormal morbidity or mortality rates.

He also wants to develop a residential well water monitoring program in the

area to insure compliance with federal safe water drinking standards.

The board took the report under advisement, then listened to Mr. and Mrs. Leon Charbonneau talk about concerns of their well water.

They said they bring drinking water into the area, not using their well water for fear of toxic contamination.

Rail Repairs Will Close Crossing

• GRIFFITH — The South Broad Street railroad crossing will be closed at least one week, beginning Aug. 31.

Trustees said Tuesday Packaging Corporation of America will be installing a spur on the E&E railroad to its facility on Main Street.

While Packaging is installing its spur, the Grand Trunk and Erie railroads will be removing "diamonds" from the tracks while they are closed.

The crossing will then be improved with new rails and blacktop.

Trustee Patricia Schadt said school buses will be rerouted and the railroad will provide a safe crossing for school children and pedestrians.

Police will be stationed on the south end of town for residents pro-

tection while the crossing is closed.

Traffic will be rerouted from south Broad Street to Avenue H to Colfax Avenue to Main Street and then to Broad.

The sanitary landfill was given an operating permit, pending compliance with several items.

Trustees reported on complaints about hazardous chemicals being dumped on the American Chemical Company's land.

Trustees Larry Owen and Mrs. Schadt toured American Chemical and Pasney Corporation.

Mrs. Schadt said runoff water at American Chemical does not contain any contaminants nor are any pumped into the septic system.

She said the firm takes away chemical residues in barrels.

There was no sign of sewer deterioration in the site, which supposedly sent effluent with too low a PH.

She said the sewers from the area will be monitored very closely by the town and the American Chemical.

Owen said both firms were cooperative and assisted the board in checking out the reports.

The board voted to give \$1,000 to the Lake County Drug Task Force. Police chief James Reyome Griffith could benefit from participating both financially and with a liaison police officer.

The police commission recommended the town participate along with other communities who have already done so.

The board approved the installation

of a six-inch water line at the northwest corner of the proposed fire station.

It also approved color coding of fire hydrants to identify the size of water lines.

The board affirmed its commitment to find a detention pond in the Cady Marsh Ditch to hold storm water.

The board approved Walsh and Kelly as contractor for the Colfax Avenue improvement project.

It approved appropriation from the local, road and street fund of \$228,000 to the cumulative capital improvement fund, which is two-thirds of the Colfax Avenue project cost from the county and \$3,478 toward the purchase of a front-end loader.

0001737

Resident alerts town to costly situation

By PAULETTE HADDIX
Post-Tribune Correspondent

GRIFFITH — A south-side resident has alerted town officials to a situation at the sanitary landfill which was reportedly costing the town thousands of dollars in unnecessary sewage treatment costs.

The problem, according to Precinct 7 Democratic Committeeman George Milne, was that the cover to a sanitary-sewer manhole had been off for two months and was allowing surface water from a 150-acre watershed to drain into the town's sanitary-sewer system.

He estimated that every inch of rain results in 27,000 gallons of water to the acre. Thousands of dollars in taxpayers' money was being wasted by the water entering the sanitary-sewer system because it was in turn being treated by the city of Hammond for a charge of 90 cents per 1,000 gallons, Milne explained.

Director of Public Works Glen Reyome said he was unaware of the problem until it was brought

to his attention by Milne, and the situation has since been corrected.

Workers were unable to find the original manhole cover, Reyome said, so he had a new cover put back in place so surface water from adjacent swamp land wouldn't drain into the sanitary-sewer system.

Milne, of 411 S. Griffith Blvd., said he had been investigating the missing manhole cover situation for some time and had known it wasn't in place for two months.

Reyome told Milne he could have been even more helpful to the town if he had informed town officials of the manhole cover's absence immediately.

A sanitary-sewer line runs to the landfill, Reyome explained, because the Environmental Protection Agency has instructed the Department of Public Works to pump surface water from the landfill into the sanitary sewer via enclosed pipe.

Other surface water in the area is supposed to travel through natural drainage to a ditch that runs under the Erie Railroad tracks.

American Chemical Co. Meets EPA Compliance

By ROSEMARY OSMULSKI
Times Correspondent

GRIFFITH — The town board Tuesday announced American Chemical Service Company is in compliance with Environmental Protection Agency regulations.

Democratic seventh precinct Committeeman George Milne told trustees at the last meeting that American Chemical Services was in violation of EPA regulations. He supported his statement with EPA reports stating the violations.

Trustee Patricia Schaad read a letter last night from James Tarpo, president of American Chemical Services stating the firm is in compliance with EPA regulations.

Tarpo's letter indicated the final compliance is the current installation of fencing enclosing the entire plant.

There were three areas previously in violation: Past land filling practices, treatment and disposal site licensing and sewer discharge quality.

Several thousand previously buried barrels containing solidified paints are now in a clay burial site. Tarpo said the site was closed in 1975 when EPA required new regulations. Since

then wastes have been taken away from the area.

The firm is installing a continuous 24-hour pH meter to monitor its sewage discharge.

Tarpo said in the 10 years the firm has been discharging into the Griffith sewer system there has been no apparent damage to the plant's sewers and the Hammond Sanitary District which treats Griffith's sewage has seen no evidence of high chemical loading in the Griffith sewer effluent.

The ERA and Tarpo signed a consent agreement and final order May 27, 1981.

Milne asked for a copy of Tarpo's letter to study. He reiterated his concern about toxic chemicals.

Following the meeting Mrs. Schaad said if the EPA is satisfied we feel we have no problem.

Trustee John Ciorolanu said Tarpo was very cooperative in the meeting with trustees and public works director. Tarpo told the town it could check the firm's effluent discharge any time day or night.

Ciorolanu said the pH meter monitor is costing the firm \$25,000.

In other business the art fair committee presented the town with two Rod Crossman paintings.

001734

Chemical facility still Griffith issue

By PAULETTE HADDIX
Post-Tribune Correspondent

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While the Town Board's investigation into similar concerns Milne raised early in August is still continuing, the board reported at its Aug. 15 meeting that there apparently were no real problems at American Chemical.

Milne disputed this and alleged American Chemical is in violation of town and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards. He presented the board with copies of EPA inspection reports to document his charges.

The board members said they would study Milne's material, along with the nearly completed laboratory analysis of water in a ditch on the American Chemical property and an expected up-to-date report from the EPA.

The town's director of public works, Glen V. Reyome, said he asked the EPA to make a report on the American Chemical operations several days ago.

He declined comment on the preliminary findings of the laboratory analysis, preferring to wait for the formal and final report from the lab.

While Town Board members were reportedly told by an

American Chemical spokesman that the only barrels buried on the site were filled only with sand, Milne contends that there are hazardous materials in the barrels.

The EPA report he had, which was based on data gathered May 8-9, 1980, stated there were 25,000 to 30,000 small drums containing an estimated five million pounds of sludge buried at American Chemical. The report also stated there was a tank truck partially full of sludge also buried there.

Another EPA report, based on a compliance inspection conducted Dec. 4, 1980, ordered that American Chemical put up adequate fencing or post 24-hour surveillance so people or livestock don't enter the "active portion of this facility."

Milne said that to his knowledge, this hasn't been done. However, building contractor and Griffith resident Roy O. Regeski reported he saw a fencing company at American Chemical Tuesday, but Reyome said he didn't think the fence was for the area cited by the EPA.

Also, the EPA ordered that American Chemical establish an evacuation plan and maintain proper records on the treatment, storage and disposal of its material.

To help resolve the American Chemical complaints and investigation, Reyome said he will try to have a report on the situation ready for the board's Sept. 15 meeting. Board members suggested that representatives of the EPA and American Chemical could be invited to explain their positions publicly.

Regulations Violated

By ROSEMARY OSMULSKI
Times Correspondent

GRIFFITH — American Chemical Service Corporation is apparently in violation of Environmental Protection Agency hazardous waste regulations.

George Milne, a self-appointed Griffith watchdog, has presented the town board with copies of an EPA report, indicating the company has violated the EPA regulations since May, 1980.

Violations had apparently not been corrected by a subsequent inspection in December of that year.

The EPA cites the company for not fencing the area of providing 24-hour

surveillance, lack of a prepared evacuation plan, improper record-keeping on handling, treatment, storage and disposal of waste and lack of cross-references of disposal.

Milne said the company has 25,000 to 30,000 drums and a tank buried at the firm's site on south Colfax Avenue.

Public works director Glenn Reyome said a report on water collected in a ditch on the site will be ready for the next board meeting.

Milne said high acidity discharge into the town's sewer in May violates town ordinance and should require a fine as stated in ordinance 78-11.

Trustees took the EPA and Milne's report under study.

Griffith plant says charges create panic

By PAULETTE HADDIX
Post-Tribune Correspondent

GRIFFITH — Allegations made about operations at American Chemical Service, 420 S. Colfax St., have created an unfounded "environmental panic," officials of the chemical reclamation company say.

The company's position was contained in a letter read at the Town Board meeting Tuesday night.

"American Chemical Service is presently under no court order to comply or in violation of any local, state or federal law that we know of," the letter addressed to town trustees stated.

"However, we are sure somewhere, someone is working on a new set of regulations for us to comply with," the letter added in reference to the seemingly continual change in environmental standards during the past 10 years.

American Chemical Service became a topic of discussion at the Town Board level in early August when southside precinct committeeman George Milne said his constituents were concerned about the chemical plant's past landfill practices, its disposal of chemicals into the town's sanitary sewer and compliance with federal requirements for licensing.

"Armed with copies of routine correspondence between American Chemical Service and the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), a few misguided residents have sought to create an environmental panic," the American Chemical Service letter stated in its introduction.

Milne asked town trustees for a copy of the American Chemical letter so he could study it. "I will be back at the next meeting (Oct. 6) to respond," Milne said.

Town Board member Patricia Chaadt said town officials are

satisfied with the quality of American Chemical's operation. She said neither the EPA nor the laboratory testing water samples near the plant has indicated there is any need for alarm.

Regarding the past landfill practices, the American Chemical letter said that in October 1980 it had complied with an EPA order for a landfill area closed off in 1975 to be better sealed.

Drums containing solidified paint wastes in bulk and partially filled drums are in the ACS landfill, which hasn't been active in more than five years.

The erosion in the wall of the fill area has been caused by heavy rains and will be corrected with re-grading later this month, the letter said.

American Chemical Service's letter also said there is no sign of chemical leakage from the eroded area.

Milne had expressed concern that firm's use of the town sewer system could damage the system if wastes with excessively high acidity were discharged into it.

In response, the letter said that the company has used the town's sewage system for 10 years with "no detectable damage to the sewer within our plant."

To resolve any question about how acidic the plant's sewage discharge is, the company is in the process of installing a continuous 24-hour metering device.

Milne also had complained of a lack of fencing at the plant, which he said was required after an EPA inspection Dec. 4, 1980.

The purpose of the inspection was to determine if the company was suitable for licensing as a recycler of used solvents under new federal regulations.

American Chemical Service officials reported that the fencing was completed earlier this month and "we now expect to be licensed."

0001735



Post-Tribune photo by Chuck Billard

Erosion

Griffith officials have inspected the American Chemical Co. site after reports of possible chemical contamination were brought to their attention at Tuesday night's Town Board meeting by southside resident George Milne, shown pointing to soil erosion in an area where chemical drums may be buried. Milne also reported smelly fumes rising from water in a nearby ditch. The town engineer is to stake out the boundaries of the town sanitary landfill to the south to find out if any of the erosion is taking place on town property. Town officials are considering consulting the Environmental Protection Agency for recommendation on how to handle any problems which may exist at the site.

0001738

Chemical probe continues

GRIFFITH — Town officials are still investigating charges made earlier this month about chemical pollution on the south side of town, but preliminary investigations have uncovered no real problems.

That was the gist of comments made by Trustees Patricia Schaadt and L. E. Owen at the Town Board meeting Tuesday night.

They said spokesmen at American Chemical Co. and Pazmay Inc., an oil drum reclamation business, has been cooperative in explaining exactly what they do and how they do it.

The two companies are adjacent to one another and are just north of the town landfill.

The board investigation into the companies' operations is in response to charges made at the Aug. 4 Town Board meeting about alleged chemical pollution and erosion problems at American Chemical.

Owen said town officials are still waiting for a report on water samples taken from a nearby ditch, but reported that the water stain previously noted may be rust rather than something dangerous.

He reported, "the barrel company appears to be a good operation. It isn't allowing any chemicals or pollutants to touch

soil or the ditch."

Mrs. Schaadt added, "It has its own septic system. There is no runoff into our sanitary sewers."

She said that town officials are still waiting to hear if there is a problem with pH levels there.

The area where there has been soil erosion isn't near a barrel burial ground as previously thought, Owen said. However, he said the land will be filled in and graded as it is supposed to be.

The barrels that are buried have been filled with sand and are in a pit surrounded by clay, Mrs. Schaadt pointed out.

The 13-acre town sanitary landfill nearby has had its operating permit renewed by the state, Owen announced. The permit is contingent upon several requirements being met, including the start of a program to monitor water wells as of Jan. 1, 1982. Also, trench depth is to be limited to 15 feet and sidewalls of sand are to be sealed with five feet of compacted clay.

In other business Tuesday night, the Town Board decided to contribute \$1,000 to the Lake County Drug Task Force. Clerk-Treasurer Don E. Genis said he wouldn't know where the money could be squeezed from the budget until later this year.

The contribution is to be used as "buy money" by undercover

policemen investigating drug use in the county.

The board signed an agreement with the County Commissioners and Highland for three-way participation in the proposed improvement of Cline Avenue between 45th Avenue and Ridge Road.

The agreement, which hasn't yet been signed by the other parties, calls for the three governmental units to make a joint application to the Federal Highway Administration for urban funds to pay for the road and bridge improvements. Each is to pay one-third of the local funds required.

The proposed project would involve widening the road to four lanes. Additional street lighting would be included.

The terms of the agreement call for the County Commissioners to develop specifications for the joint application and pay for a consultant to prepare the application.

The segment of Cline Avenue proposed for improvements is the dividing line between Griffith and Highland. The project would involve widening the bridge over the Cady Marsh Ditch as well.

Griffith Amends Proposed Hike

Griffith — The town board Tuesday amended its proposed water rate increases.

The Indiana Public Service Commission requires the town set a fee for unmetered water in the parks.

The board set a \$57 flat fee for each water fountain in the parks.

Trustee Patricia Schaadt said the town has been paying for the water all along, and now it will be paid out of the park department budget.

Town board President Carl Konopasek said the town petitioned

the PSC for their water rate increase last month, citing a rate increase by its supplier — The Gary-Hobart Water Co. — and increased operating costs.

In other business, the board approved an economic development loan for Robert and Catherine Vidimos, developers of Calumet Testing Services.

The firm, which has 26 employees, is relocating from East Chicago to 1943 Griffith Blvd. in the Brant Industrial Park, Griffith, so its

services can be expanded.

Calumet Testing Services does non-destructive testing of metal and metal components for local industries.

George Milne, Democratic precinct committeeman, reported on rain-caused soil erosion on land cover over a chemical dumping site at the American Chemical Co.

Milne urged the area, which he said contains 17 "very, very toxic chemicals" be fenced in.

Milne also said the firm also has

been sending acid waste beyond the allowable acidity limits into the town's sewer system.

Konopasek said there have been no complaints from Hammond, which treats Griffith sewage.

The firm monitors its own waste and reports monthly to the town.

Public Works Director Glenn Reyome and Trustee Larry Owen inspected the site Monday, taking samples from the dumping site for analysis. The report should be available in two weeks.

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